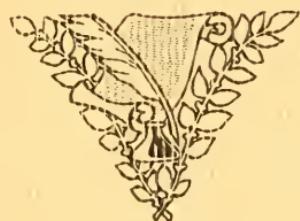


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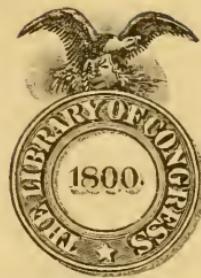
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Poems of

Historic Elkhorn



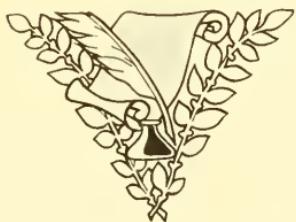
By
Mrs. Jennie C. Morton



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Poems of
Historic Elkhorn



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Mrs. Jennie C. Morton

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HISTORIC ELKHORN

Elkhorn

By Mrs. Jennie C. Morton

Oh, deer-like river of unwritten song,
What beauties unknown to thy borders belong!
Music and brightness unite in the flow
Of wavelets that leap and that bound as they go.
Flowing down thro' a region of world-wide fame,
Like the Nile, thou dost water thy blue-grass the same;
And a richness and verdue belong to thy fields
Such as no other country on earth ever yields.

Formed by two rivers that wander around,
Like silver-mode fawns thro' parks wooded-bound---
Thro' grand hills, and meadows, and forests they go,
With a leap, and a start, and a swing in their flow---
And then, meeting here, they unite into one,
And, wedded, they dash toward the westering sun.

As a girdle of silver, with its buckle a dove,
Is the quaint little village in hovering love.
Sitting here with a wing on each bank of the stream,
Forks of Elkhorn 'tis called, and a tribute must claim
Of all lovers of beauty, from no matter where;
A picturesque village, in kingdom most fair.

Here embossed in cliffs, that towering rise,
'Till their tree-tops seem lost in the haze of the skies,
Then sloping away in the distance, is seen
Vaileys all spread in their deep blue green.
Here the wild freshness of sweet rural plain;
Mossy crags with their cascades in silvery rain.
Here are marvellous caves, and grotto and dell,
Where Indians once lived, where wood nymphs may dwell.

There are lovely wild flowers growing round everywhere;
There are shells in the waters than sea shells more rare--
Where the graceful Elk bounded, unhunted, free-born,
Its river's still running, the deer-like Elkhorn.
We have heard poets sing of Scotland's wild hills,
Of its sea-moaning caves and its mist covered dells,
Of far stretching vistas and grand avenues,
But we hold that on Elkhorn are still grander views.

We have heard of famed Switzerland's enchanting scenes,
Of her mountains, snow cap't, on which the sky leans;
We have heard of her plains, and her gorges and vales,
Sublime when swept over by snow-driven gales.
The picturesque beauty of famous Lucerne,
But we think we have scenes as sublime on Elkhorn.

Here uniting its town, like Lucerne, it seems
To Reuss are bridges across the bright streams;
And the homes of the cottagers are neatly stowed
In green yards and flowers each side of the road.
Her people are good as are any on earth
In kindness of heart and in true Christian worth,
In the business of life they pursue their own way--
"The story of yesterday's that of to-day,"

As humbly they work out the problem of life,
Not caring or thinking of vain, worldly strife.

Once this was the Indian's loved hunting ground;
Thro' cliff and thro' forest their warriors wound.
Their wild, savage yells, and their dance, and their song,
Here Elkhorn once echoed--all mournfully long.
The barbaric weapons of their bloody strife,
The stone tomahawk and the rude scalping knife,
These, here among relics too, have been found.
Where dead of the Indians are heaped in a mound,
Out on a lonely cliff, high o'er the town,
The sun warms with gold as its splendor goes down.

Here their bones bleach and decay in the sod
The greenness they seared with a fiery rod.
But in sweet forgiveness now wild flowers wave,
And blue-grass now covers the Indian's grave.
Here forest birds warble, their first songs of love
Are nesting and flying in cedars above;

And the Elkhorn they loved with a passion so deep
Flows softly around the place of their sleep.
Far below, in the light of the traveling sun,
In and out thro' the hills now its bright waters run,
With its wrinkles and dimples, as playing with fish,
That frolic and float to the bank in a swish.

The quaint little town, here and there on the stream,
Like glimpses of fairy-land, seen in a dream;
With music of water, and landscapes so fair,
The murmur of life, and its people each where,
Make a picture of beauty framed in green hills,
Edged with the silver of dashing bright rills.
Beloved of our people, wherever they be,
Most beautiful place their eyes ever see.

Sweet Violets

Upon Receiving a Basket of them from Elkhorn
in the Spring from a Friend

What memories sweet these violets bring!
O'er my fond heart now their perfumes fling
"The tender charm of my childhood's days,"
When I wandered o'er the "banks and braes"
Of bonny Elkhorn, and plucked them there,
All hidden away in some covert fair,
With white-faced flowers of moss a-bloom,
And I traced their bed by their soft perfume.

Oh, violets sweet, both white and blue,
Do teach me how ye are always true;
Did spring come soon, or spring come late,
The birds fly home, then South and wait;
No matter the tide, and no matter the time,
How deep was the snow, or how icy the rime---
I could find ye there, like modest worth,
On Elkhorn, a-bloom, perfuming the earth,

The beautiful cliffs of my own wild stream,
How I love them yet; and I fondly dream
Of their rocks and rills, and flowers so fair,
As I sit here to-night in the Editor's Chair.
Ah, never again, as in good old times,

On their crags I'll sing their praises in rhymes;
And wind, like the Indian girls once did,
Under and over, from foot to head,
Their bold, stern hills, then stand and view
The landscape rich in every hue.
By nature dressed, trees, grass, and grain
Growing unsurpassed on the lovely plain.

In early spring what a beautiful sight!
As the twilight softened the day into night;
When we sat 'neath the stately trees of the yard
Just catching a hint of green from the sward.
We looked abroad o'er the fresh plowed fields,
And on verdure beyond the spring wheat yields;
Then on hemp herd mounds all at once on fire
Like a thousand tents that blaze and expire.
These lurid lights, in the twilight air,
Gave a strange weird charm to the landscapes there.

Ah, I hear even now the quaint, wild song
That the negroes sang as they loitered along
With the old ox teams slowly driving in,
With the gray hemp bales to the farmer's bin.
Now the meek eyed cows would the milking seek
With a lazy grace all fat and sleek---
Then wander away, when milked and fed,
And drop to sleep on a blue-grass bed.
And the air was full of the fragrant scent
Of the dew-drowned grass with its sweetness blent---
The perfumes that burst from spring flowers here,
The jonquil, the buttercup, and hyacinth dear.

So sweet violets recall my happiest days
On Elkhorn, spent by its "banks and braes,"
Unknown to the world, without any care,
A glad-hearted child, with a life so fair.
From the Editor's Chair for this sweet bouquet
In fancy I kiss a hand o'er the way.

A Memory

When Spring-time comes our thoughts will turn
 To red-buds and the heather,
That bend above the bright Elkhorn,
 And blush beside that river;
To singing birds, that nest among
 Its cliffs and silver maples---
We never can forget their song,
 Nor martins on their steeples.

Spring mornings there, so sweet, so sweet,
 With nature all uprising,
In song and bloom Earth's youth to greet---
 Its gloomy clouds disguising
The water's murmurous liquid flow
 Through Elkhorn's hill and hollow.
The memory of the sunset's glow
 Our way fore'er will follow.

Our homes were there, our hearts were there,
 Tho' we wander like the heather;
Our childhood holds that place most fair;
 Most bright--that dashing river.
Oh singing birds, ye know not how
 Your matins so entralling
Of home and hearts reminds me now,
 And dear ones past recalling.

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